

Chicago Officials Ignoring Public's Budget Advice, Group Says

By William Montague

Chicago school officials are ignoring state requirements designed to increase community involvement in funding decisions, a public watchdog group has charged.

The group claims that school authorities have failed to comply with provisions of a state education-reform law requiring the Chicago Board of Education to respond to budget complaints raised by parents in annual public meetings at each of the city's 537 schools.

According to the Chicago Panel on Public School Policy and Finance, the city school board this year has ignored requests from parents at 41 schools for major budget changes.

"The board did not change any budgets, and for the second year... completely disregarded both the spirit and the letter of the law," the group charged in a report released last month.

The panel's assistant director, Diana Lauber, also accused school officials of circumventing a provision of the law that requires each school principal to clear his or her discretionary spending decisions with a committee of local parents.

Ms. Lauber's organization, an alliance of 18 local public-interest groups, was established in 1982 to monitor the school board's recovery from a serious fiscal crisis in the 1970's.

When asked to respond to the panel's report, city school officials said they had tried to address parental concerns, despite financial problems that continue to plague the district, the nation's third-largest.

Under a major reform law passed by the Illinois legislature in 1985, the city board must hold a series of public hearings at each school before drafting its proposed budget. The law stipulates that the board must "modify the budget as near as possible to meet... objections."

The law is designed, Ms. Lauber said, to ensure accountability and responsiveness from the board, which does not answer directly to the voters. Board members are appointed by the mayor.

But so far, she claimed, the results of the law have been disappointing. Most board members and district administrators, as well as the city's superintendent of schools, Manfred Byrd Jr., have failed to support the goals of the law, Ms. Lauber maintained.

"The board clearly has an attitude of 'we know best,'" she said. "And that attitude moves from the top down."

City school officials, on the other hand, say they have tried to comply with the terms of the law. But, according to one top administrator, many parents have unrealistic expectations of what the board can do.

"It is rarely the case, if ever, where parents say, 'Cut back on that item and use the money for this item,'" said Maxey Bacchus, the district's director of planning. "It's almost inevitably a request for more money here and there and everywhere else, too."

This year, Mr. Bacchus said, the board has attempted to satisfy some of the more frequent demands heard at the annual meetings. The budget for textbooks and school supplies has been increased by 65 percent, he said, and another \$7 million has been set aside for building repairs.

But the district, which already faces a projected \$60-million shortfall, has only limited authority to meet such demands, Mr. Bacchus said. This year, he pointed out, the legislature refused the board's re-

quest to increase a city tax specifically earmarked for textbooks.

While the panel's report strongly criticizes the board's failure to adjust the budgets of individual schools, Mr. Bacchus argued that such a policy would fuel a fierce competition for funding.

"If certain schools are selected for increases, more and more parents will turn down their budgets in the expectation that they will get more money," he said. "The board believes that any funding increases should be across the board."

Ms. Lauber acknowledged that the board's resources are limited, but criticized school officials for refusing to deal with parental concerns on a school-by-school basis.

"They don't understand, or they don't want to admit, that there is room within existing budget resources for parents to make decisions," she said.

Mr. Bacchus also defended the board against the panel's charges that it had adopted an overly narrow definition of the discretionary funds available to school principals.

The panel wants the local parents' council to have review authority over the use of staff members funded

by the federal Chapter 1 program. Mr. Bacchus, however, said the city's schools already have advisory committees to examine the use of Chapter 1 funds.

For now, Ms. Lauber said, the panel intends to continue its efforts to educate community members about their rights under the law. But many parents, she contended, have become apathetic because of the board's lack of responsiveness, a charge Mr. Bacchus denied.

Ms. Lauber said her organization might renew its efforts to promote decentralization of the district, which would strip the board of much of its budget-making authority. But such a proposal failed to gain passage in the legislature this year, facing strong opposition from the board and groups representing district employees.

"We are certainly sympathetic to the community's desire to be involved," said Charles Burdeen, a spokesman for the Chicago Teachers Union. "But the solution isn't to subdivide or redive the district. It's a matter of enforcing the law, or clarifying it to the point where the bureaucracy is forced to acknowledge that the community has a voice and they have to listen to it."

School Segregation Varies By Region, Study Finds

By William Snider

Although nationwide trends in black and Hispanic school segregation remained relatively unchanged during the first half of the 1980's, there were significant variations among states and metropolitan areas, according to a new report by the University of Chicago's National School Desegregation Project.

The data further illuminate the findings of a report released last fall by the project, whose director, Gary Orfield, led both studies.

Both conclude that while the proportion of blacks attending racially isolated schools throughout the nation remained constant during the period from 1980 to 1984, the proportion of Hispanics attending such schools has risen dramatically and has passed that of blacks in many areas. (See *Education Week*, Nov. 26, 1986.)

'Enormous Variation'

But the data on segregation levels among individual states and metropolitan areas, which were obtained from the U.S. Education Department's office for civil rights, show "enormous variation in levels of segregation and in recent changes," the new report notes. (See chart on this page.)

The researchers found the highest levels of black student segregation in "two of the old hotbeds of abolitionism, Illinois and Michigan, and in a pioneer of modern civil-rights law, New York."

At the opposite extreme, the researchers said, "the states with the highest levels of integration are primarily states which once practiced absolute segregation under state laws requiring strict racial separation." Delaware and Kentucky topped the list of the most integrated

states among those with significant black populations.

Comprehensive Plans

Mr. Orfield and his colleagues, Franklin Monfort and Rosemary George, concluded that the most integrated states typically were those that had the most comprehensive mandatory busing plans, involving both their largest urban areas and surrounding suburbs.

While segregation levels for black students in most states remained relatively stable during the first half of the decade, the report said, "those areas which made further progress since 1980 tended to have either new desegregation orders or plans worked out under requirements of state governments."

The researchers also noted that states that have the highest measures of segregation for black students are found mostly in the Midwest and Northeast. These states, they said, typically lack comprehensive metropolitan-wide desegregation plans.

The existence of many small, predominantly white, suburban districts in the Midwest and Northeast, the authors said, also hinders efforts to measure metropolitan desegregation in those areas, because the federal government does not collect racial data from many of the smaller districts.

In contrast to the stable levels of segregation of black students, the researchers found that Hispanic student segregation has risen steadily in all states, except Massachusetts, with at least 5 percent Hispanic enrollment.

"The trends are so uniform in so many different settings," the researchers wrote, "that it is clear that there is a very strong tendency in

Black and Hispanic School Enrollment, 1984

Rank	Black Percentage of Total Enrollment	Percentage of Black Students in 90-100% Minority Schools	Hispanic Percentage of Total Enrollment	Percentage of Hispanic Students in 90-100% Minority Schools
1	Washington, D.C. (92.5)	Washington, D.C. (95.2)	New Mexico (48.4)	Washington, D.C. (95.2)
2	Mississippi (90.4)	Illinois (89.6)	California (29.2)	New York (89.1)
3	Louisiana (82.5)	New York (86.7)	Texas (27.9)	Illinois (81.2)
4	South Carolina (80.6)	Michigan (86.3)	Arizona (21.5)	Texas (80.0)
5	Maryland (77.3)	New Jersey (86.8)	Colorado (16.7)	New Jersey (77.1)
6	Georgia (35.8)	Missouri (44.6)	New York (13.6)	Connecticut (29.4)
7	Alabama (34.5)	Pennsylvania (41.6)	New Jersey (8.8)	Pennsylvania (29.4)
8	North Carolina (30.0)	Mississippi (38.7)	Florida (8.1)	California (26.8)
9	Delaware (25.8)	Maryland (38.3)	Illinois (8.0)	Florida (25.6)
10	Arkansas (25.3)	Tennessee (36.2)	Connecticut (6.8)	Mississippi (25.2)
11	Illinois (24.8)	California (35.4)	Nevada (6.6)	Arizona (18.0)
12	Virginia (23.6)	Alabama (34.8)	Wyoming (6.4)	New Mexico (17.5)
13	Florida (23.1)	Connecticut (33.0)	Massachusetts (5.0)	Indiana (16.8)
14	Tennessee (20.8)	Georgia (31.7)	Washington (4.3)	Hawaii (12.2)
15	New Jersey (18.8)	Texas (31.4)	Idaho (3.8)	Louisiana (7.8)
16	New York (18.7)	Louisiana (30.4)	Rhode Island (3.8)	Rhode Island (5.0)
17	Michigan (16.7)	Indiana (24.8)	Oregon (3.5)	Georgia (4.1)
18	Missouri (16.2)	Arizona (23.8)	Utah (3.3)	South Carolina (3.5)
19	Ohio (14.4)	Wisconsin (19.5)	Kansas (2.9)	Michigan (3.4)
20	Texas (13.9)	Florida (19.4)	Washington, D.C. (2.9)	Maryland (2.5)
21	Pennsylvania (12.8)	South Carolina (18.7)	Delaware (2.1)	Wisconsin (2.3)
22	Indiana (10.7)	Ohio (13.2)	Hawaii (2.1)	Massachusetts (2.1)
23	Kentucky (10.6)	Arkansas (11.3)	Nebraska (2.0)	Arkansas (1.5)
24	Connecticut (10.3)	Virginia (8.4)	Oklahoma (2.1)	Montana (1.4)
25	California (10.1)	Oklahoma (7.3)	Michigan (1.9)	Missouri (1.2)
26	Nevada (9.9)	Hawaii (7.3)	Indiana (1.7)	Tennessee (1.1)
27	Oklahoma (9.9)	North Carolina (6.3)	Wisconsin (1.7)	North Carolina (1.0)
28	Wisconsin (7.7)	New Mexico (5.2)	Pennsylvania (1.6)	Alabama (.8)
29	Kansas (6.8)	Kansas (5.3)	Maryland (1.5)	Alaska (.4)
30	Massachusetts (6.3)	Nevada (3.0)	Alaska (1.4)	Ohio (.4)
31	Rhode Island (5.6)	Massachusetts (1.7)	Ohio (1.1)	Utah (.4)
32	Colorado (5.1)	North Dakota (1.4)	Virginia (1.1)	North Dakota (.3)
33		Rhode Island (1.3)	Iowa (1.0)	Nevada (.2)
34			Montana (1.0)	Colorado (.1)
35			Minnesota (.8)	Idaho (.1)
36			Louisiana (.8)	Kansas (.1)
37			Missouri (.8)	Minnesota (.1)
38			Georgia (.4)	Oklahoma (.1)
39			Arkansas (.3)	Virginia (.1)
40			North Carolina (.3)	
41			South Carolina (.2)	
42			Tennessee (.1)	

SOURCE: National School Desegregation Project, University of Chicago

In 1984, 30 years after the U.S. Supreme Court declared "separate but equal" schools unconstitutional, large proportions of minority students in many states remained in racially isolated schools. States that once mandated segregated education and still have high proportions of black students have made the most progress toward integration, according to the National School Desegregation Project.

American society today for an increasing isolation of Hispanic children and there have been no policies that have been able to reverse that tendency."

The pervasiveness of these trends, they said, "reinforces the basic con-

clusion that desegregation will not occur by accident and that explicit, and often sweeping, plans are necessary to make significant progress," the authors stated.

Copies of the new study, as well as one released earlier this summer on

race, poverty, and educational opportunity in metropolitan Chicago high schools, may be obtained by sending \$3 for each copy to Bill Harma, University of Chicago, Office of News and Information, 5801 South Ellis Ave., Chicago, Ill. 60637.